In partnership with First Nations

First Nations Forestry Program

SUCCESS STORIES

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Canada

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Natural Resources Canada
Canadian Forest Service
580 Booth Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0E4

E-mail: FNFPbulletin@nrcan.gc.ca
Tel.: 613-947-7377

Compilation: Julia Kristjanson, Karen Mousseau, Jennifer Harris, Stephen Cudmore, Gregory Weir and Stéphane Leblanc

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Introduction

Forests and forest resources play a central role—culturally, spiritually and economically—in First Nations communities across Canada. Their importance will continue to grow as more commercial forest land comes under First Nations control and management, as First Nations youth look to participate more fully in forest-based economic opportunities, and as the evolving forest industry increasingly seeks out First Nations co-venture partners and contractors.

This edition of *Success Stories* presents a snapshot of recent projects that the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP) has supported to build First Nations' capacity to participate in—and benefit from—sustainable forest management and forest-based economic opportunities. The stories are representative of the projects that have been successfully completed over recent years. Projects have involved facilitating access to forest resources and business partnerships, transferring knowledge and tools for sustainable forest management, and providing workers with specialized technical training and work experience.

Since 1996, the FNFP has contributed over $50 million for approximately 2,000 community-level projects. These partnership projects are valued at over $185 million and have been carried out in more than 500 First Nations communities across Canada. This unique partnership program is funded and administered jointly by Natural Resources Canada and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, with project decisions made largely by the First Nations forest practitioners themselves. In addition, in recent years, the program has expanded to support regional-scale capacity-building initiatives, such as the province-wide Aboriginal Forestry Initiative in New Brunswick and the Whitefeather Forest Initiative in northwestern Ontario.

The program's successes can be measured in terms of individual and community benefits. Over 9,500 First Nations workers have participated in specialized training and workplace experience sessions. The program has supported the development of 200 business plans and 145 feasibility studies on forest-based opportunities, which has resulted in business partnerships and contracting successes. In addition, several communities have taken over forest management responsibilities from provincial authorities and have obtained forest land certification.

As First Nations work towards achieving their vision for the future of their communities, they will be looking to their forests for cultural, spiritual and economic well-being. There will be many challenges. It is our hope that this publication will be a useful reference for those engaged in forestry capacity-building in the future—for First Nations forestry practitioners as well as for their partners and colleagues in industry, academia and government.

Chapter 1:

Unique Approaches

Aboriginal Skills and Employment Partnership, New Brunswick

Province-wide initiative matches Aboriginal workers with forestry jobs

Since it was launched in 2004, the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Partnership Program New Brunswick (ASEP-NB Inc.) has made huge strides toward fulfilling its mandate: to foster, develop, support, train, employ and champion the participation of Aboriginal people in New Brunswick's forest sector.

The initiative is the result of a collaboration between the New Brunswick Forest Products Association (NBFPA), five Aboriginal Human Resources Development Agreement holders (AHRDAs), the North Shore Micmac Council, the Mawiw Tribal Council, the Saint John Valley Tribal Council, the First Nations Human Resources Development Corporation, the New Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples Council, Human Resources and Social Development Canada, Natural Resources Canada's Canadian Forest Service (NRCan-CFS) and the Government of New Brunswick.

ASEP-NB Inc.

Steve Ginnish, Coordinator at ASEP-NB, has been involved with the program from the beginning. In the initial proposal for ASEP-NB, entitled *People, Land and Opportunity*, it was noted that there was a shortage of Aboriginal workers in the sector. "There weren't many Aboriginal people working in forestry," says Steve.

As a result, ASEP-NB set out to determine the industry's employment needs and to identify the number of available Aboriginal workers in New Brunswick. Steve found that there were unemployed trained workers as well as potential workers who lacked the necessary skills.

ASEP-NB created seven initiatives to ensure that First Nations workers were trained and placed in full-time work in the forestry sector. "The initiatives range anywhere from attracting First Nations people, to identifying skilled forestry workers who are not working, to finding immediate placements for those people that have been trained in the past," says Steve. "We want to get them placed with industry or within the spin-off portions of industry. There's so much more to running forestry than just the big mills."

Steve feels that the forestry sector is an ideal industry in which to work because it offers a huge range of career opportunities. It is his hope that ASEP-NB will help correct people's misconception that the industry is just about cutting down trees.

"Our main objective is to get people placed who are First Nation," says Steve. "And that can range from a truck driver who's hauling pulp or a finished product, or it can be a mechanic that fixes the truck or the bulldozer; it could be a millwright, could be something out in the forest, could be a manager or supervisor, anything that's part of the forestry sector. Conservation, enforcement, protection, anything."

One of ASEP-NB's goals when it was launched in 2004 was to create at least 200 sustainable full-time positions over its four-year mandate. Now in its fifth year, ASEP-NB has surpassed that goal. In addition to creating 200 new forestry positions for First Nations workers, the initiative has helped provide training for over 400 new and existing positions.

ASEP-NB was able to accomplish this, explains Steve, thanks to generous support from various collaborators, including the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP), which was instrumental in bringing the project partners together. Since 2004, the FNFP has also provided $70,000 annually to help the organization recruit First Nations workers to the forestry sector.

FNFP funding has also been allocated to forestry career awareness. The money was used to cost-share the salaries of students, providing them with summer employment and exposing them to careers in forest research at Natural Resources Canada's Canadian Forest Service (NRCan-CFS).

"In collaboration with the Canadian Forest Service here in Fredericton, we created positions within various research departments," says Steve. "We opened those opportunities up to university students who are in the early stages of a science or business administration degree. We gave them a taste of the type of employment they could expect if they pursued a forestry career."

Chris Pitt, FNFP manager at the NRCan-CFS Atlantic Forestry Centre, has seen the positive outcome from ASEP-NB, not only for program participants but also for the industry itself. "We're trying to develop some capacity within the First Nations communities to develop some economic spin-offs in the forestry sector,"

says Chris. "We may even get out of this some qualified Aboriginal people who want to come work with CFS down the road, maybe in a forest research capacity."

Since 2004, 15 to 20 students from the 15 First Nations throughout New Brunswick have been brought into the ASEP-NB program each year. Steve says that the main goal is to find full-time employment for these students when they graduate. But ASEP-NB also wants to increase the level of skilled workers in the sector, and increase the number of First Nations students in math, science and business-oriented programs.

"(We want) to have more people graduate with a science degree, a forest management degree or a biology degree," says Steve. "(We want) more First Nations people involved in those programs."

Steve explains that most of the First Nations students in New Brunswick have been focusing on the social sciences. He feels that by encouraging First Nations youth to pursue science and math-based programs, the initiative will increase capacity for, and employment rates within, the province's forestry sector.

With continued support from ASEP-NB's collaborators, the program is sure to enjoy further success over the coming years.

Total Funding (2004–2008)	
FNFP Funds	$322,975
First Nations Funds	$902,671
Other Funds	$2,740,299
Total	**$3,965,945**

For more information, please contact:

Steve Ginnish
ASEP-NB Inc.
47 Church Road
Eel Ground, NB E1V 4E6
Tel.: 506-622-4735
Fax: 506-622-8012
E-mail: asepnbsginnish@nb.aibn.com
Website: www.asepnb.org

Youth Outreach, Atlantic Canada

Youth awareness programs promote forestry careers in Nova Scotia

In 2005, the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq in Nova Scotia identified the need for a youth program to introduce youngsters to traditional knowledge and forest skills, and open their eyes to possible careers in the natural sciences.

"We were trying to think of something for younger kids, to move them toward science studies and forestry," says Bryan Brooks, who was hired to identify and implement a program.

The answer was "Survive and Stay Alive," a program developed by HELP Group Management Inc. in New Brunswick, which teaches students in the primary grades basic forest knowledge and survival skills. The program was piloted in the summer of 2006 at the Millbrook First Nation near Truro, Nova Scotia. Traditional knowledge was also included in the program in order to promote cultural awareness of natural resources and forestry among the First Nations youth.

Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq

Fourteen youth enrolled. "They had a great time," Bryan says, "and the program was well received by parents and the community."

With funding assistance from the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP), the Confederacy launched "Survive and Stay Alive" in four communities in the summer of 2007. "The turnout was great," Bryan says. "We had about 17 students each in Eel Ground First Nation, NB; Saint Mary's First Nation, NB; and Indian Brook First Nation, NS; as well as almost 45 here in Millbrook First Nation, NS."

For one week, the youth learn about different topics each day, including food, fire, water, shelter and first aid. The program is designed to be both educational and fun, says Bryan. "We split the kids up into teams, like a competition, and record the activities with camcorders. But everyone wins. On the Friday, we had prizes and cake, invited the parents to come, and passed out DVDs with videos from the week's proceedings."

"It's great that kids are getting into the woods and in touch with their roots," he continues, "and learning about natural resources. Quite a few of the Millbrook students are now interested in the natural resources field. Hopefully we're building a bridge to the future."

The program found tremendous support among the communities, Bryan reports. "They provided buses and supervision, set up outdoor toilets, and let us use community buildings to take shelter from the weather."

As well, the Envirothon program for high school students has been gaining popularity among First Nations communities in the Atlantic region. Envirothon is a provincial and state competition in which teams of five to seven students vie for recognition and scholarships while learning about environmental science and natural resource management. Provincial and state champion teams take part in the North American Canon Envirothon competition, which is held in Canada every fifth year.

In 2002, Debbie Waycott, now executive director of the Nova Scotia Forestry Association, applied for FNFP funding to run a pilot Envirothon program at the high school in the Eskasoni First Nation in Nova Scotia. Since then two other communities have gotten involved in the program, and First Nations teams have participated in the Envirothon competition at the provincial level, winning in several of the categories, including forestry.

The FNFP has provided funding for Debbie to go to participating schools and work with the students. The funds also cover registration fees for the teams to attend provincial competitions.

"Since 2002, the program has probably touched the lives of over 150 First Nations students," Debbie says, "and about 60 percent of them have gone on to post-secondary studies."

Some of those students are pursuing careers in the sciences, but Envirothon is an enriching experience for everyone who participates. "One of the things the students have to do is prepare and deliver a presentation to a panel of judges, so presentation skills are very important," Debbie says. "Students tell me they've really come out of their shells through participating."

Debbie is proud of the young people she has worked with, and feels that Envirothon's effect on the communities has been very positive.

"Students who have participated at the provincial level become real role models, and I see more and more excitement about Envirothon among younger students. Parents come up to me and say, 'Great work, now our kids are on *our* case about recycling, the environment and our natural resources.'"

Total Funding

From 2006–2008, FNFP contributed $19,000 to the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq to help cover the cost of Nova Scotia Envirothon activities.

For more information, please contact:

First Nations Envirothon Program
Debbie Waycott
Nova Scotia Forestry Association
PO Box 6901
Port Hawkesbury, NS B9A 2W2
Tel.: 902-625-2935
Fax: 902-625-3045
E-mail: dwaycott@nsfa.ca
Website: www.nsfa.ca

Total Funding

Survive and Stay Alive Program (Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq)

FNFP Funds	$25,600
First Nations Funds	$6,400
Other Funds	$0
Total	**$32,000**

For more information, please contact:

Survive and Stay Alive
Bryan Brooks
Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq
57 Martin Crescent
Millbrook, NS B2N 5V3
Tel.: 902-895-6385
Fax: 902-893-1520
E-mail: bryan@cmmns.com
Website: www.cmmns.com

General Assembly of First Nations Administrators, Quebec

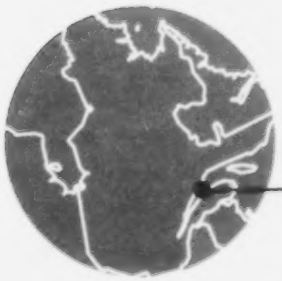
General Assembly of First Nations Administrators: setting the example for First Nations community participation

Many First Nations communities in Quebec directly benefit from the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP). Out of 40 communities in Quebec, 35 have received the program's support for a project at some point. "The General Assembly of First Nations Administrators (GAFNA) is a catalyst for First Nation participation in Quebec forestry; it is in part due to the existence of this Assembly that several communities have already participated in the program," says Alain Dubois, senior officer for federal forestry programs with the Quebec Region of Natural Resources Canada's Canadian Forest Service (NRCan-CFS).

In Quebec, administration of the FNFP is carried out in conjunction with the General Assembly of First Nations Administrators. Together with the FNFP's Provincial/Territorial Management Committee (PTMC), this body assumes responsibility for the selection criteria for projects submitted to the program. Established in 1999, the GAFNA has no equivalent elsewhere in Canada. The PTMC is made up of six First Nations members, two representatives from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, two representatives from Natural Resources Canada and one representative from the forest industry.

The General Assembly of First Nations Administrators includes representatives from each First Nations community in the province. The GAFNA meets once a year to concentrate on issues of common interest related to forestry development in the communities and to determine the direction of the FNFP in Quebec. If there are recommendations or improvements to be made to promote its success, they are addressed. The PTMC consults all of the participants before rendering its decisions. On the whole, the GAFNA is the PTMC's favoured means of consultation for the management of the FNFP in Quebec.

The General Assembly of First Nations Administrators also serves as a forum for communities that are active in forestry. For them, it is a unique roundtable for the exchange of forestry-related information. It allows them to present their point of view to the program's PTMC and to other federal and provincial departments attending the forum.



General Assembly of First Nations Administrators

Participants take advantage of the Assembly to network and to find out how the situation is developing for the province's First Nations. Through the GAFNA, relationships between communities are created that would not otherwise happen. "As a matter of fact, this is one of the only roundtables on forestry where communities have the opportunity to meet and to network," says Alain Dubois. "Overall," he adds, "the GAFNA influences the program's final project decisions, while giving the FNFP a feel for what's going on in Quebec's First Nations communities.

Total Funding

FNFP contributed close to $5,000 to support the attendance of 11 First Nations communities at the 2007–2008 General Assembly.

For more information, please contact:

Alain Dubois
Canadian Forest Service
Natural Resources Canada
1055 du P.E.P.S.
PO Box 10380
Quebec, QC G1V 4C7
Tel.: 418-648-7134
Fax: 418-648-2529
E-mail: alain.dubois@nrcan.gc.ca

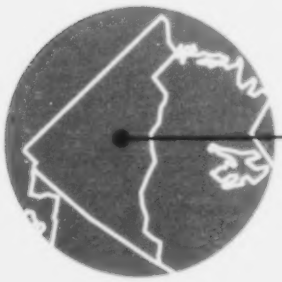
Council of Yukon First Nations, Yukon Territory

Yukon First Nations find "good fit" with community-based log building program

In the Yukon, First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP) funding helped support a training program that gave First Nations members the chance to learn log home building construction skills within their own communities.

The training program was launched in 2007 through the Council of Yukon First Nations and ran for eight weeks at on-site training camps during the summer of 2008. The Tr'ondek Hwech'in, Carcross Tagish, and Champagne and Aishihik First Nations hosted the first three camps. They were chosen because each is accessible to several of the 14 First Nations in the Territory.

The camps provided room and board for 12 to 15 trainees at a time. During their weeks in camp, trainees learned skills by building 16 x 20 metre (48.7 x 60.9 foot) log cabins. While the course followed building standards established by the International Log Builders' Association, its goal was to provide basic hands-on training. "Students weren't accredited professionals when they finished the course," says Tim Cant, project manager with the program, "but they had the basic skills to start working in the industry."



Council of Yukon First Nations

Tim, along with Council staff Ann Marie Swan, Gail Barnaby and Brenda Asp, spent the better part of 2007 and early 2008 preparing for the launch of the program, enlisting other partners and working out all the details. While the First Nations contributed the training dollars for the students, the FNFP provided funds for building materials, as well as additional funding for travel and accommodation.

Finding partnerships proved fruitful: the Council of Yukon First Nations' administration took the lead on the project and handled many of the administrative costs; Indian and Northern Affairs Canada backed the program with a capacity-building grant for two years; and the Yukon Department of Education supported it through Yukon College, which also contributed in kind by helping to develop the curriculum.

But finding partners was just the first step. There were campsites to be selected; trainers to be hired; on-site food and housing to be arranged; student travel, accommodation and tool kits to be organized.

"We were very lucky to find three trainers with tremendous backgrounds," Tim says.

"Two worked with faculty members from Yukon College to develop the work plan and curriculum. The third trainer developed his own work plan and curriculum for his students."

"It was a huge endeavour," Tim continues, "but if you believe in something you can do it. There are always challenges, but we all work together and try to help each other. The communities put more into it than they were being paid for because they saw the potential. So we had funding, people who wanted to learn, and communities that were willing to support their students."

Everyone involved couldn't be happier with the way the program came together. "There were just so many 'good fits' on this. We opened doors for the students and brought education to the community. We provided basic skills, with great trainers who we hoped would plant a seed—make the students realize they could build their own homes, work for their community housing departments, or maybe even start their own businesses," says Tim.

The program was created because people in the communities wanted the Elders to pass their log building skills on to younger generations. The Elders have knowledge to share, but have lacked the resources to create a curriculum and run a course. "With a program in place," Tim says, "Elders could come in and contribute, or students could go and learn from them independently."

The other "good fit" Tim saw had to do with building materials. The students needed about 40 logs to build each cabin and the logs had to be cut, hauled, peeled, prepared and delivered to the sites. The First Nations have a good relationship with the local lumber companies,

and regular purchases for the program helped to build that relationship and contribute to the local economy.

For the first session, a call for proposals led to two local suppliers providing the logs. That had a number of positive effects. First, some of the logs came from trees killed by the Spruce Bark Beetle. The trees were salvageable, and harvesting them created room for healthy new growth in the local forest.

As well, the First Nations, through funding from the Yukon Indian People Training Trust and the Training Policy Committee, hired a couple of students to work with the lumber companies. "That turned out great," Tim says. "One of them worked out so well that the company hired him to finish out the season."

The first session of the program kicked off in November 2007. Several groups of about 10 trainees went through the prerequisite eight-day Industrial Safety Training course at Yukon College in Whitehorse. On-site training at the three camps began in February 2008.

There were 29 graduates from this first session. "We invited each community to send three people. When the deadline arrived, we had about 40 applicants. Most were in the 18 to 25 age bracket, and about 10 were between 40 and 50. Most of the trainees were men, but we had four or five women. All of the students were First Nations, and although we did have requests from non-Aboriginal students, we just didn't have space," says Tim.

There is a housing shortage in Yukon First Nations communities, and a shortage of skilled construction workers. Tim is hopeful that some of the graduates will be hired as apprentices by log home builders in the area. But the real goal of the program is to increase capacity in the First Nations communities. "We believe that the trainees will use what they've learned to get ahead," says Tim.

"I know that some communities have hired program graduates for their housing departments. And that one of the communities is contracting a company to build log homes, and would like to see graduates work for that company," Tim adds.

Total Funding	
FNFP Funds	$160,050
First Nations Funds	$81,100
Other Funds	$0
Total	**$241,150**

For more information, please contact:

Brenda Asp
Council of Yukon First Nations
11 Nisutlin Drive
Whitehorse, YK Y1A 3S4
Tel.: 867-393-9226
Fax: 867-668-6577
E-mail: brenda.asp@cyfn.net
Website: www.cyfn.ca

Chapter 2:

Business Development

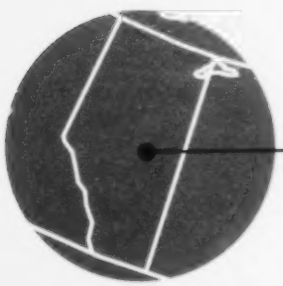
"Success in Partnerships" FNFP Regional Conference, Alberta

Seventh regional conference strengthens forestry across the West and North

In 2007, the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP) hosted its seventh regional conference, organized out of Natural Resources Canada-Canadian Forest Service's (NRCan-CFS) regional office in Edmonton.

Over 150 delegates from Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and the Northwest Territories attended the "Success in Partnerships" conference, which ran from March 7 to 9 at the River Cree Resort and Casino in Enoch, Alberta. Enoch Cree Nation is located outside of Edmonton's west city boundary.

The conference focused on the importance of strong partnerships in building successful forestry initiatives. In opening and closing sessions, representatives from across the region provided delegates—most of whom were from First Nations communities—with an overview of opportunities in the region.



Enoch Cree Nation

Conference workshops dealt with four specific themes: forest protection, training Aboriginal youth for the future, non-timber forest products, and traditional knowledge. In these sessions, delegates received information and updates on subjects such as the Mountain Pine Beetle threat in Alberta, Junior Ranger and School to Work programs, business opportunities in woodlots and log home building, and firefighting contracts.

Between sessions, delegates had the chance to network and visit a wide range of exhibits, with sponsors including government departments, colleges and universities, forest sector organizations and companies, and workforce organizations.

"The demand for these conferences has always been high," says Lorne West, Liaison Manager with NRCan-CFS's Northern Forestry Centre. "It's a chance for First Nations communities and other partners in the forestry sector to share information about new and emerging trends in the industry."

"It's also an opportunity for First Nations communities to make contact with each other and meet potential partners. They can find out about programs in other communities and identify complementary programs that might lead to partnerships."

Lorne points out that the "Success in Partnerships" theme of the conference seems particularly appropriate. "Since the beginning of the

First Nations Forestry Program, one of its greatest achievements has been in attracting and maintaining a wide range of partners—from industry and government to educational institutions and research organizations."

"We know from previous experience that these conferences are valuable for opening doors for First Nations that want to become more active in the forestry sector," explains Lorne.

Total Funding

FNFP contributed close to $28,000 towards the 2007–2008 "Success in Partnerships" conference, mainly through registration fees paid by the BC, AB, SK, MB and NT Provincial/Territorial Management Committees.

For more information, please contact:

Lorne R. West
Canadian Forest Service
Natural Resources Canada
5320–122nd Street
Edmonton, AB T6H 3S5
Tel.: 780-435-7279
Fax: 780-435-7356
E-mail: lwest@nrcan.gc.ca

Acadia First Nation, Nova Scotia

Acadia forestry initiative contributes to well-being of First Nations communities

Management of the Gardners Mills Property, 1,174 hectares of forests and lakes near Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, was assumed by the Acadia First Nation in 1993. Realizing the potential of the property, the community quickly developed and implemented a forest management plan that included building the Acadia First Nation sawmill.

By 2004, with the support of the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP), the operation—built around a portable sawmill—was developing a sustainable resource, employing members of the community and producing value-added products for market, such as dimensional lumber.

Since then, the Acadia First Nation sawmill has continued to expand its operations. The mill is now housed in a fixed location and has acquired a trailer with a grapple for moving logs from the forest to the mill. The addition of new equipment, including a planer and an edger, has helped expand the mill's range of products. Employing six people and operating nine months a year, the operation finds a ready market for virtually everything it can produce.

Acadia
First Nation

In the 2006–2007 fiscal year, the FNFP continued to support the Acadia First Nation's plan to expand its operations and its sustainable forestry activities.

The 2-kilometre access road into the forest's hardwood stand was extended, making it easier to carry out pre-commercial thinning and harvesting. Both of these processes are part of a long cycle that Alton Hudson, Manager of Natural Resources for the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq, describes as ongoing.

In an old growth forest there are a lot of mature trees blocking the sun and not much new growth on the ground. So the first step in managing the forest is selection harvesting. This reduces the old growth enough to allow light in and foster regeneration. Inferior old growth is cut out, while the best and strongest trees are left standing. These trees supply the seeds for new growth.

Once there is enough natural seedling regeneration, the tall, top-quality trees, or overstory, are cut down; they're perfect for the sawmill. After the overstory is removed, the next stage involves thinning out the saplings in the stand to make room for the strongest to grow and become the new generation of forest.

"Every year there is both pre-commercial thinning of the young stands and harvesting of the overstory to be done," Alton points out. "If a forest this size is well managed, it will be a never-ending economic resource."

FNFP support has been key to enabling the Acadia First Nation to practise sustainable forestry. "It has really been the backbone," says Alton. "The technical advice, crews and funds all come together to make it happen."

"The forestry initiative contributes to the community in many ways," Alton adds. "Community members are now in the woods working. The mill is constantly training people, and when they leave, many of them use their skills doing other jobs in the community. This past year we had two guys leave the mill and go into carpentry in the community. There's a large fishing operation here, and there's always construction for that. Also, a lot of the lumber from the sawmill goes to construction in the community."

Total Funding

FNFP Funds, 2004–2008
(through the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq)

Road Construction/Maintenance	$16,740
Forest Improvement Work	$18,390
Training	$2,000
Project Management	$14,310
Total	**$51,440**

For more information, please contact:

Tom Pictou
Acadia First Nation
RR 4, Box 5914-C
Yarmouth, NS B5A 4A8
Tel.: 902-742-0257
Fax: 902-742-8854

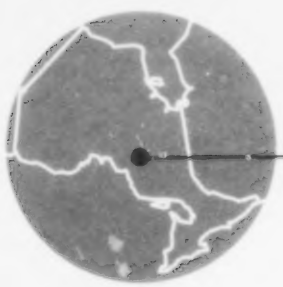
North Shore Tribal Council, Ontario

North Shore Tribal Council works to expand cooperation, build community capacity

Ontario First Nations with a stake in the forest lands north of Lake Huron are working to advance sustainable forestry, increase employment and economic development opportunities in their communities and help manage the forest for future generations.

Five First Nations have an interest in the North Shore Forest, located between Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie. Four of the communities belong to the North Shore Tribal Council (NSTC), which is taking the lead in establishing a working relationship between the communities and Northshore Forest Inc. The company holds a sustainable forest licence on 840,000 hectares of the forest's productive lands.

Dean Assinewe is Program Manager with the North Shore Tribal Council's Forestry Unit. Dean and his colleagues have been collaborating with Northshore Forest Inc. to develop a protocol for these relationships. By cooperating with the forestry company, the Council aims to expand opportunities for forest-related employment and economic development in the communities.



North Shore Tribal Council

"The challenge was to decide whether the relationships should be built through the Chiefs and Councils or through economic development departments," Dean says. "We decided that, since most of the opportunities relate to business, it would be preferable to draft the protocol in terms of economic development."

A draft version of "Protocols for Cooperation" was completed in 2007 and has been circulated to all stakeholders for feedback. While the document goes through the approval process, cooperative ventures are moving ahead.

"We have an agreement in place to do a skills inventory," Dean says. The inventory will make the connection between skills, and job and business opportunities on a community-by-community basis.

"It will identify individuals who have forestry backgrounds or who can start small forestry-related businesses. There are opportunities in tree planting and supplying communities with fuel wood. There are also technical jobs such as tree marking, and opportunities in industry support areas such as road maintenance."

To take advantage of these opportunities, the communities must build new capacity. They need to encourage community participation in forest management planning, and identify

employment opportunities and training requirements. Most of all, they need to attract young people to careers in forestry.

The North Shore Tribal Council took a step in that direction in 2007. With the assistance of the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP) it began work on developing a Rangers Program. "The concept came from my office," Dean says. "I drummed up interest and got the support of the Council. The focus for the near future needs to be on working with the communities to raise funds for the program, and finding individuals to administer it."

"As a first step, we were able to deliver an awareness program by joining forces with the Youth Environment Leadership Forum (YELF), which is another program delivered by NSTC. This allowed almost 30 students from seven communities to attend a one-week forum at the Canadian Ecology Centre near Mattawa, Ontario," Dean adds.

The YELF provided young people with the opportunity to learn about the environment and discover traditional skills such as paddle-making. They also had a chance to meet with some of the Chiefs—including Anishinabek Nation Grand Council Chief John Beaucage—and hear from them about the importance of building expertise in the community.

Total Funding	
FNFP Funds	$22,440
First Nations Funds	$6,010
Other Funds	$35,500
Total	**$63,950**

For more information, please contact:

Dean Assinewe
North Shore Tribal Council
PO Box 28, Hwy 17 East
Cutler, ON P0P 1B0
Tel.: 705-844-2340
Fax: 705-844-2563
E-mail: dean@mamaweswen.ca
Website: www.mamaweswen.ca

First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Sustainable Development Institute, Quebec

Investing in First Nations youth to increase knowledge of environmental careers

How do we reach our youth? How do we encourage them to explore possibilities for employment in the environment sector? How do we increase awareness among educators of these possibilities? The proposal of the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Sustainable Development Institute (FNQLSDI) was to hold a conference on environmental careers in partnership with the First Nations Education Council and the First Nations Human Resources Development Commission of Quebec.

Organized by the FNQLSDI, the conference was held in Trois-Rivières on April 3–4, 2007. It attracted approximately 170 participants, half of whom were students from various First Nations communities in Quebec. The financial support of the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP) helped to cover, among other things, the travel and accommodation costs for participants.

First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Sustainable Development Institute

Students had the opportunity to listen to workers share their professional experience in various sectors and ask questions. They were also able to visit several work environments, including la Cité de l'énergie in Shawinigan. Overall, they gained a better understanding of what jobs in the environment sector are like, and became more familiar with the companies that offer them.

As Mario Gros-Louis, a forest engineer and project manager at FNQLSDI explains, "The purpose of the conference was to provide youth with greater knowledge of the training and job opportunities in the environment sector. First Nations youth are the leaders of tomorrow. They will be involved in managing lands and resources in the immediate future. So we must provide them with the tools they need."

The idea for the conference took shape following the First Nations Socio-economic Forum, held in October 2006 in Mashteuiatsh. Since the goal set at that time was to create 10,000 new jobs, the organization of a conference on environmental careers seemed an excellent way to contribute to this goal. The aim was to raise awareness among youth and their influencers about the current and potential opportunities in this sector.

The conference proved a great success, the level of participation and enthusiasm of the youth being the evidence. The event also demonstrated the willingness of communities to promote jobs leading to sustainable development among the leaders of tomorrow.

"We must demonstrate responsibility with regard to our resources and take steps to ensure the optimal development of our communities," says Mario. "Evironmental careers play a key role in shaping the future of First Nations people. It is therefore important to communicate clearly to our youth about the opportunities in this field."

Total Funding

FNFP contributed close to $8,000 to support the attendance of 15 First Nations communities at the FNQLSDI conference.

For more information, please contact:

Mario Gros-Louis
FNQLSDI
250 Place Chef Michel-Laveau, Suite 101
Wendake, QC G0A 4V0
Tel.: 418-843-9999
Fax: 418-843-3625
E-mail: mgroslouis@iddpnql.ca
Website: www.iddpnql.ca

Chapter 3:

Access to Forest Resources

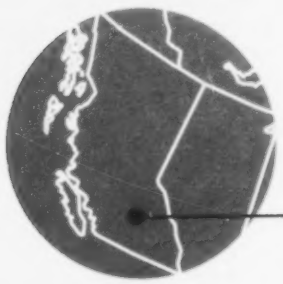
Lower Similkameen Indian Band, British Columbia

Land management a shining example for partnerships between First Nations and other communities

British Columbia's Similkameen Valley, like the neighbouring Okanagan, is brimming with farms and ranches, orchards, wineries, parks and commercial forests. Across the province, major corporations have long held most of the forestry licences. For years the participation of local First Nations communities was fairly limited, with few lasting benefits.

Communities in the area lobbied for the better part of a decade to have at least some of the forests licensed to local authorities. When the provincial government reformed its forest tenure system in 2003, it made room for the expansion of First Nations and community-based licences.

Communities in the Lower Similkameen Valley—including the village of Keremeos, the Upper and Lower Similkameen Indian Bands and the Regional District of Okanagan/Similkameen—responded to the opportunity by forming a partnership to apply for a local forestry licence.



Lower Similkameen

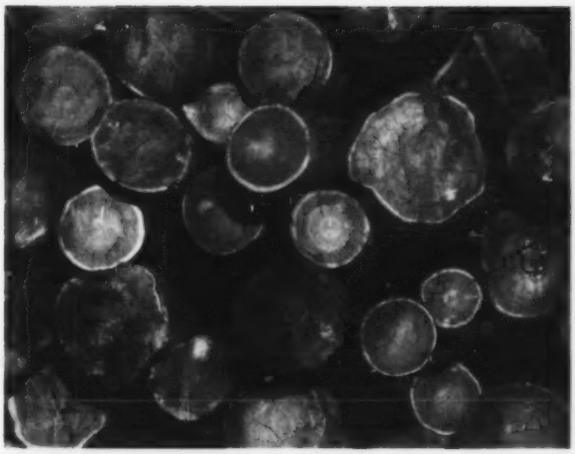
"We applied to the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP) for funds to help set up the partnership and put together the licence application," says project manager Steve Borcsok.

Throughout the 2006–2007 fiscal year, the partnership and licensing application came together. "We had numerous meetings with the communities and other stakeholders and we hired lawyers and accountants to work out the legal and financial aspects of the agreement," Steve explains.

"Once the FNFP provided funding, I was able to get commitments from industry partners. Everyone was very helpful. Companies provided Geographic Information System (GIS) analyses and information about the resources in the forest, and the communities provided space for meetings and made a variety of in-kind contributions. Everyone made real, measurable contributions. It's really a showcase for how partnerships between First Nations and non-First Nations can operate."

The newly registered Similkameen Valley Planning Society submitted its licence application to the BC government at the end of the 2006–2007 fiscal year.

The land the Society applied to manage extends from Keremeos in the north to the US border in the south. It's bordered by Cathedral Provincial Park on the east and by another expanse of Crown forest on the west.



The 54,217-hectare tract includes almost 40,000 hectares of forest, about 20,000 of which are open to harvesting. As a licence holder, the Society will also manage the 34,000 hectares that are non-forested. This land is home to wildlife such as mountain goats and sheep, and is a significant source of traditional First Nations foodstuffs. It could provide small business opportunities in eco-tourism, medicinal plants or traditional foods.

To apply for a forestry licence, the Similkameen Valley Planning Society had to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the timber supply and address conservation issues. It also had to consult with First Nations and other communities, and with stakeholders such as major forest licensees, rangers, trappers, and hunting and recreation organizations. "We had to show community awareness and support for the application," Steve says.

The licence application is under final consideration by the BC Ministry of Forests and Range. "The initial tenure would cover five years," explains Steve. "During those years we have to show that we have public involvement and can provide prudent and diligent stewardship of the land. If we do, the province will extend the agreement for 25 years, and review and renew it every 25 years after that."

Total Funding	
FNFP Funds	$75,000
First Nations Funds	$6,000
Other Funds	$25,500
Total	**$106,500**

For more information, please contact:

Chief Joe Dennis
Lower Similkameen Indian Band
PO Box 100
Keremeos, BC V0X IN0
Tel.: 250-499-5528
Fax: 250-499-5538
E-mail: chief_dennis@lsib.net

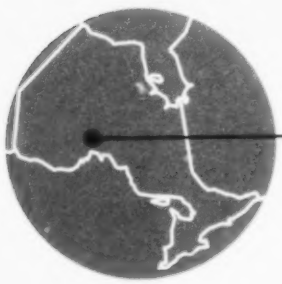
Nishnawbe Aski Nation, Ontario

Handbook aims at "unplugging the development backlog" in Northern Ontario forests

The Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) has a traditional claim to a band of forest that runs across Northern Ontario from Quebec to Manitoba. It is some of the last unallocated forest land in the province.

Opening any contested region to development involves consultations with First Nations. In the past, problems have arisen when consultations were not held, or were not properly handled. Dramatic events like those in New Caledonia and Ipperwash make headlines, but quieter forms of resistance—blockades or lengthy lawsuits—can also have a significant social and economic impact.

The Nishnawbe Aski Nation decided that someone needed to lay down basic rules for acceptable consultations between government, industry and First Nations communities. In 2001, they created a working group and developed "A Handbook on Consultation in Natural Resource Development."



Nishnawbe Aski Nation

The first edition of the handbook was published in English, Cree, Oji-Cree and Ojibway. It was well received by First Nations. Since 2001, a number of Supreme and Provincial Court decisions have changed the legal landscape, and NAN has responded by updating the handbook. Members of NAN and other First Nations are hopeful that the new version of the handbook, which reflects current provincial and federal court decisions related to Aboriginal and Treaty Rights, will become a useful tool for all stakeholders, including federal and provincial governments.

The second edition was published only in English; however, in 2007, with support from the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP), NAN began translating the third edition into Cree, Oji-Cree and Ojibway.

"The translation is a very important aspect of the project," says Terry Wilson, a forester who provides professional and technical assistance for the 49 communities that are home to the 45,000 people in the Nishnawbe Aski Nation.

"Many of the Elders don't speak English. They're the ones who are on the land. They see the impacts of forestry on their traplines. By translating this document, we can bring the Elders into the consultation process and

have their concerns addressed. It gives them a means of getting involved and a way to keep informed."

"The handbook was NAN's response to the need for a process that includes First Nations and other local communities in meaningful consultations," Terry explains. "We have often seen 'information sessions' about development plans for lands subject to First Nations land claims. These sessions are not necessarily held in First Nations communities but they are subsequently passed off as community consultations. When it comes to community consultations, the provinces say it's a federal responsibility, the federal government says it has no jurisdiction over provincial Crown lands, and the private sector says it's not their problem. Our handbook defines a process for consulting with Aboriginal communities that acknowledges both Aboriginal and Treaty Rights as confirmed by the courts and the 1982 *Constitution Act*. The goal is to unplug the backlog and get economic development going. Things like blockades and lawsuits are costly for all parties. If we take these consultations seriously, it will be cheaper and better for everyone."

"We'd like to see the handbook used by governments who are responsible for conducting community consultations," says Terry. "But it needs to be consistently promoted. I think it will take pressure from the communities for it to be used."

Meanwhile, demand for the handbook has been growing. "Requests for the new edition have been coming in," says Terry. The Office of the Deputy Minister at the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources has ordered copies, as have companies in the natural resources sector.

Total Funding	
FNFP Funds	$25,000
First Nations Funds	$11,500
Other Funds	$79,000
Total	**$115,500**

For more information, please contact:

Terry Wilson
Nishnawbe Aski Nation
710 Victoria Avenue East
Thunder Bay, ON P7C 5P7
Tel.: 807-625-4935
Fax: 807-623-7730
E-mail: twilson@nan.on.ca
Website: www.nan.on.ca

Chapter 4:

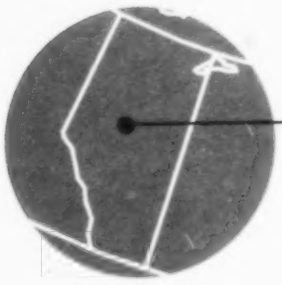
Forest Management

Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation, Alberta

Pine beetle survey helps First Nation prepare for impact of infestation

Alberta's Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation is preparing to meet the ecological and economic challenges presented by an infestation of mountain pine beetles that is decimating forests in British Columbia.

Pine beetles live under the bark of trees and normally kill mature and over-mature trees. Due to recent hot summers and mild winters, however, beetle populations have exploded and the insects are attacking healthy trees. They have destroyed thousands of hectares of valuable pine in British Columbia and the infestation has moved eastward into Alberta. Pine trees killed by beetles have commercial value—the lumber is still sound—but they must be harvested within two to five years. Dead trees left standing in the forests represent not only an economic loss, but also a fire hazard.



Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation

The Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation owns a logging company and has three reserves of forest land in areas potentially affected by the pine beetle. "We needed to know whether our lands were infested," says Chief Cameron Alexis.

Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation secured funds from the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP) in the 2006–2007 fiscal year, which enabled the community to survey two of its forested reserves. The survey helped the First Nation identify susceptible pine stands and use the information to make decisions.

"The community needs to decide whether to harvest trees that may be killed by the beetles," Cameron explains. "The Elders want to keep the forest as natural as possible, but if the beetles attack our forests and we don't harvest the trees, in three to five years there will be a problem with fires."

"The survey helped us determine what areas are at risk and how many logs we may be able to harvest. This is important because we need to apply for additional harvesting permits and find buyers for the wood. Because of the infestation, there's a surplus right now and prices have fallen, but we won't have any choice—in a few years the trees won't be useable."

In spite of the depressed prices, additional logging in anticipation of beetle infestation on reserve forests is fostering economic activity in the community. The Alexis Nakota Sioux

Nation engaged contractors to harvest the beetle-threatened wood and to train workers hired from the community. Cameron believes that the training will improve their career opportunities. People with these forestry skills can move into related areas such as forest fire management. The survey itself employed about 20 members of the community and enabled them to acquire valuable new skills.

Cameron hopes to see those skills put to work in an expanded survey program over the coming years. The Alexis Nakota Sioux forest that was surveyed in the 2006–2007 fiscal year is adjacent to Jasper National Park and West Fraser Mills timber limits, which is also facing the beetle crisis. "Our lands are just across the divide so we need to work together. We're meeting as partners—the Park may hire our people to survey and work on the pine beetle situation," Cameron explains.

Total Funding	
FNFP Funds	$54,650
First Nations Funds	$13,670
Other Funds	$0
Total	**$68,320**

For more information, please contact:

Chief Cameron Alexis
Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation
PO Box 7
Glenevis, AB T0E 0X0
Tel.: 780-967-2225
Fax: 780-967-5484
E-mail: info@alexisnakotasioux.com
Website: www.alexisnakotasioux.com

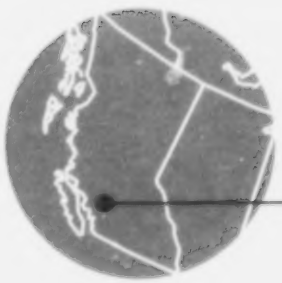
Squamish Nation, British Columbia

Forest botanic garden presents opportunity for future growth

Construction is complete for the Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre in Whistler, British Columbia. The new complex is the result of collaboration between the Squamish and Lil'wat First Nations and the Resort Municipality of Whistler, and will introduce visitors to the traditions of these First Nations communities.

One of the highlights of the Cultural Centre will be a forest botanic garden, which is being funded in part by the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP). Randall W. Lewis, Environmental Coordinator for the Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre, wanted to create a garden that would preserve and celebrate the cultural and natural heritage of both First Nations.

"In my initial negotiations with Whistler, I made it clear that we had to protect the indigenous plants of this area," says Randall.



Squamish Nation

It was important to both First Nations that their traditional way of life be preserved and shared with youth and Elders from their communities. But the Squamish Nation also wanted to ensure that people from around the world were made aware of the region's natural heritage.

"The forest botanic garden, the plants, we want to use that as an education for our children, for our Elders to get an understanding of what can grow in these areas, such as culinary herbs for the Istken restaurant within the Cultural Centre," says Randall. "But we also want an education tool to connect us with European and Asian markets to show them... what we can preserve and protect."

A prominent location was chosen for the Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre—opposite the Fairmount Chateau Whistler—making it an ideal tourist destination during the Vancouver 2010 Olympics.

It was also agreed that the garden will feature non-timber forest products, including the alpine mushrooms that grow in abundance in Lil'wat Nation. There is great potential for the First Nations to profit from the harvest of wild mushrooms and other indigenous medicinal plants, and leaders from both Squamish and Lil'wat are interested in expanding into the international market.

In addition to preserving and promoting the two First Nations' natural heritage, the Cultural Centre and forest botanic garden have generated employment for people from both communities.

The Cultural Centre opened its doors in the summer of 2008—and with it, the door to many more opportunities for the Squamish and Lil'wat Nations.

Total Funding	
FNFP Funds	$26,320
First Nations Funds	$6,630
Other Funds	$15,000
Total	**$47,950**

For more information, please contact:

Randall Lewis
Squamish Nation
PO Box 2180
Squamish, BC V8B 0B5
Tel.: 604-892-2292
Fax: 604-892-3476
E-mail: randall_lewis@squamish.net
Website: www.squamish.net

Tootinaowaziibeeng Treaty Reserve, Manitoba

Ancient discovery provides opportunity to preserve and explore heritage

Located about 400 kilometres northwest of Winnipeg between Duck Mountain and Riding Mountain Provincial Parks, the Tootinaowaziibeeng Treaty Reserve (TTR) has harvested lumber since the mid-1990s. But in 2002, something was discovered that changed the way the community saw its landscape: a local contractor unearthed human remains from approximately 1,200 years ago.

The timing was fortunate. According to Boyd Mancheese, a researcher at TTR, the community was already in the process of conducting a traditional land study. They were looking into whether any parts of the reserve could be declared heritage sites.

A few years later, Dr. Linda Larcombe, an archaeologist at the University of Manitoba, contacted Boyd. She offered to conduct an archaeological survey of the site through her company, White Spruce Archaeology.

With Boyd's assistance and with funding from the Manitoba Heritage Grants Program, Linda led a small archaeological survey during the summer of 2005. She and several TTR students from Grandview High School tested in areas that had been designated as harvesting cut sites.

The community responded very positively to the initiative, says Boyd, especially because First Nations youth had found summer employment through the project. However, there had only been enough funding to send two students at a time.

In the winter of 2006, TTR applied to the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP) to secure funding that would allow them to expand the project. Thanks to assistance from the FNFP, as well as the Manitoba Heritage Grants Program, and wood products manufacturer Louisiana-Pacific, White Spruce Archaeology and TTR have been able to conduct surveys in the Duck Mountains for the past two summers.

"The FNFP's contribution really helped," says Boyd. "It allowed us to increase the number of students hired for the project." In both 2006 and 2007, an average of 10 TTR students at a time were paid to take part in the surveying. Not only did the project provide the youth with income, it also offered them the opportunity to learn about their heritage while working with the forestry industry to manage cultural and heritage resources.

"We basically modelled a way that archaeology and heritage can work with forestry for the preservation and the conservation of heritage," says Linda. Under her guidance, the TTR students unearthed arrowheads and stone tools that enabled the group to confirm how old the site was.

Boyd hopes to continue the project's success with more surveys and other initiatives in the future. One activity he would like to pursue is an online museum to showcase the artifacts that the students have discovered over the past three years.

"The potential is there for more work to be done in the area," says Boyd. "I hope we can do it more often, have it become an annual project as long as we have enough funding. The interest is there from the community and the students."

Total Funding	
FNFP Funds	$20,000
First Nations Funds	$20,000
Other Funds	$36,300
Total	**$76,300**

For more information, please contact:

Boyd Mancheese
Tootinaowaziibeeng Treaty Reserve
292 General Delivery
Shortdale, MB R0L 1W0
Tel.: 204-546-3334
Fax: 204-546-3090

Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq, Nova Scotia

Unique program delivery builds pride, self-reliance in Nova Scotia communities

Across most of Canada, Natural Resources Canada's Canadian Forest Service (NRCan-CFS) administers and delivers the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP) through contribution agreements with individual First Nations communities.

In Nova Scotia, the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq, one of two tribal councils in the province, delivers the program to its member communities. A contribution agreement through the FNFP ensures that the 13 First Nations across the province have relatively predictable funding for their forestry activities each year.

Alton Hudson, Manager of Natural Resources at the Confederacy, provides technical advice. "It works out quite well," he says. "Most communities have their own forest manager. Every year I meet with the managers and ask them what they want to do." With their guidance, and approval from the Chief and Council, Alton develops a work plan that is sent to NRCan-CFS in Fredericton for review and approval.

Each community is allotted an equal amount of funding for the year. The program starts on April 1, and by June, the communities have to decide how they are going to use the funds, within the objectives and criteria of the FNFP. Then they submit their work plans. "Some communities do more than others," Alton explains, "and sometimes a community will drop out for a year or two. If a community has no plans for the year, the money allocated to it is redistributed among the others. It always works out."

This approach to program delivery lets people take pride in managing their own woodlots, Alton observes. "They decide what they want to do and make it happen. I get calls from individuals saying they want to move into a stand and do a treatment. It's not like I have to guide them. They know what to do, and how to do it. And they're proud of doing it."

The number of forest workers in each of the 13 First Nations communities varies depending on the size of the forest and kind of project being undertaken. Alton estimates that throughout the province there are roughly 30 workers at any given time.

Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq

Total Funding	
FNFP Funds	$94,530
First Nations Funds	$23,630
Other Funds	$0
Total	**$118,160**

For more information, please contact:

Alton Hudson
Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq
PO Box 1590
Truro, NS B2N 5V3
Tel.: 902-895-6385
Fax: 902-893-1520
E-mail: forestry@cmmns.com
Website: www.cmmns.com

Every community has a management plan for its forest and Alton is on hand to help update the plans as needed. "We work with the communities to achieve their goals. If their goal is to have a property certified and licensed as a sustainable forest, we'll support them. One of the properties, a stand of about 600 hectares in Pictou Landing, is certified. Another, in the Annapolis Valley, has about 120 hectares of the most beautiful old growth forest in Nova Scotia. The band there is trying to set it aside for educational purposes."

The Confederacy supports the communities with services such as a Geographic Information System (GIS) department. Technicians with Global Positioning System (GPS) units are sent out to gather data, which is used to create detailed maps of areas that have been treated. Because this service is provided by the Confederacy, the bands save money, which can go towards training workers on chainsaw safety and maintenance.

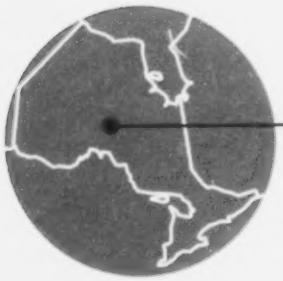
Animbiigoo Zaagi'igan Anishinaabek, Ontario

FNFP helps First Nation participate in forest planning

Animbiigoo Zaagi'igan Anishinaabek is a First Nation that, until recently, did not have a land base. This has changed with the formal establishment of a reserve in May 2008.

With the support of the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP), the Animbiigoo Zaagi'igan Anishinaabek First Nation has been developing strategic and operational plans for its Forestry Department since 2002. Each year the community has focused on one strategic piece of the forestry "puzzle." First it developed Geographic Information System (GIS) operations and capabilities. Then it developed plans for non-timber forest products, ongoing forest operations, and value-added forestry products.

Ongoing FNFP support over the 2006–2007 fiscal year enabled the First Nation to integrate previous work into comprehensive strategic and operational plans.



Animbiigoo Zaagi'igan Anishinaabek

"Failing to plan, is planning to fail," says Joe Donio, Band Administrator and Development Officer. "We needed to establish priorities and determine what steps to take in order to roll out some of these businesses. The opportunities in non-timber forest products are especially suited to community members who might want to start businesses."

The First Nation has identified a range of under-used species, as well as non-timber and traditional resources that have economic potential for the area. These include wild blueberries and mushrooms, willow and balsam boughs for use in crafts, and the Canada Yew, which is a source of taxol, a substance used in some cancer treatments. The community is also studying the use of birch "waste products" for fuel chips and shipping palettes.

"From the outset," Joe says, "the process has helped us develop a plan to not only cut the forest, but to manage it in a way that promotes traditional uses."

Many of the forests in the area where the Animbiigoo Zaagi'igan Anishinaabek live are held under provincial sustainable forest licences. Public input plays an important role in developing management plans for these forests. Licence holders, who are responsible for harvesting, monitoring and renewing the forest resources, have a strong incentive to develop partnerships that promote local economic development.

"The FNFP has helped us prepare for these cooperative partnerships," Joe says. "Now, with our experience and planning, we're better prepared to sit at the table and participate."

There is no doubt that this experience will also prove invaluable as the First Nation develops its land use plans for the reserve land base.

Total Funding (2002–2008)	
FNFP Funds	$124,880
First Nations Funds	$136,979
Other Funds	$50,100
Total	**$311,959**

For more information, please contact:

Joe Donio
Animbiigoo Zaagi'igan Anishinaabek
PO Box 120
Beardmore, ON P0T 1G0
Tel.: 807-875-2785
Fax: 807-875-2786
E-mail: jdonio@lakenipigonojibway.org

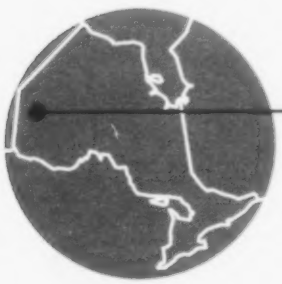
Pikangikum First Nation, Ontario

FNFP support helps First Nation prepare for opportunities in Ontario's boreal forest

The Whitefeather Forest, north of Kenora, Ontario, was the first pilot for community-based land use planning in the province. When its Community-based Land Use Strategy was adopted as policy by Pikangikum First Nation and the Ontario government in September 2006, Pikangikum First Nation took a meaningful step towards acquiring a commercial forest management tenure within a 1.3 million hectare tract of boreal forest.

Under the strategy, Pikangikum First Nation will take a lead role in planning for the forest, working in collaboration with the Ministry of Natural Resources. The strategy focuses on harmonizing economic development and ecological health in the Whitefeather Forest, and will make use of both Ojibway indigenous knowledge and western science.

"The First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP) was the very first supporter of the Whitefeather initiative," says Senior Technical Advisor Andrew Chapeskie. "The FNFP provided seed money that the First Nation used to hire technical support, develop documentation and start a dialogue."



Since then, Pikangikum First Nation has been engaged in activities on many fronts. It created an inventory of forest and indigenous knowledge that covers everything from sturgeon spawning grounds to pictograph sites, and is cooperating on research projects with a number of universities. In a project with the University of Manitoba, researchers are working with Elders and trappers to identify indicators that can be used to monitor changes in boreal forest ecosystems.

With the help of the FNFP, Pikangikum is developing a long-term training strategy. Brad Henry, Regional Initiatives Coordinator with the FNFP in Ottawa, has been working with Pikangikum on the strategy since 2007. "Training is being put in place so that the community will be able to take advantage of the employment opportunities once the sustainable forestry licence is in effect," he explains. "They anticipate that the licence will be issued in 2011."

Brad's job is to provide technical assistance to the community as they develop a strategic training plan, work on funding and partnership proposals and implement the training. "We have been discussing partnership initiatives with a number of organizations. Confederation College in Thunder Bay has been particularly supportive

and will be tailoring programs for our needs. Some of them will be delivered in Pikangikum."

Planning for post-secondary courses is only a small part of the strategy however. "People here face a lot of barriers. Only about 25 percent of the young people complete high school and only about one percent pursue post-secondary education. Young women are often mothers by the age of 16. The community needs a lot of support if the training strategy is to succeed," Brad explains.

"The program is expected to train about 250 people for 160 jobs over a five-year period. The community has no experience in managing projects of this scale. But if Pikangikum is successful, it will make it easier for other First Nations undertaking similar projects. That's why the FNFP has committed to providing technical support to Pikangikum First Nation as it develops and implements its training program," Brad concludes.

Total Funding (1997–2008)	
FNFP Funds	$175,200
First Nations Funds	$230,060
Other Funds	$110,000
Total	**$515,260**

For more information, please contact:

Alex Peters
Whitefeather Forest Management Corporation
Pikangikum First Nation
Pikangikum, ON P0V 2L0
Tel.: 807-773-9954
Fax: 807-773-5536
E-mail: enquiries@whitefeatherforest.com
or
alexpeters@whitefeatherforest.com
Website: www.whitefeatherforest.com

Eagle Village First Nation, Quebec

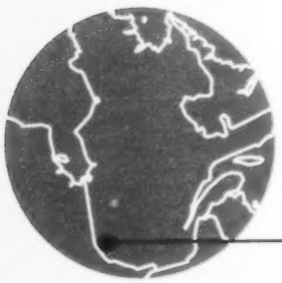
Land development respectful of residents' values and the environment

In the Témiscamingue region in northwestern Quebec, logging is a major economic activity that is conducive to job creation. Until recently, however, the Eagle Village/Kipawa First Nation, which lives in this region, was not fully benefiting from this activity. To correct the situation, the community of about 800 members, including 300 residents, set up a Land and Resources Management Office, which provides support for the Chief and the Band Council in their decision making. The Office has proven to be very useful.

The community seriously wanted to strike a balance between protecting its rights and traditional activities, and forest logging by big forest industry companies. Not only did the community want a bigger say in this matter, it also wanted increased participation and benefits for the community. Consequently, in 2003, the community implemented forest activity harmonization measures to incorporate its needs, rights and interests into natural resources management based on sustainable development of its lands.

Three people played a key role in that regard. The first is Larry Paul, Coordinator of the Land and Resources Management Office. An Algonquin, he has in-depth knowledge of the territory based on his extensive experience working in the forest. He is supported by two Quebec forestry technicians: Michel Mongeon, Land Management, Sustainable Development and Forestry Certification Advisor, and Louis-Philippe Dénommé, who looks after the technical aspects of the harmonization measures. Thanks to their team spirit, these three men have successfully established and implemented appropriate measures.

With the support of the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP), they provided technical assistance for the community, drew up a work plan with forestry industry companies and provided coaching for the band's silvicultural activities. They then set up land management procedures. And because of the importance of country food to the community, particularly moose meat, they were interested in preserving the wintering areas of the moose. Accordingly, they gathered and analyzed relevant data. The acquired knowledge is now being put to good use in consultations involving the Quebec Department of Natural Resources and Wildlife, forest companies and the community.



Eagle Village First Nation

Total Funding (2000–2008)	
FNFP Funds	$117,949
First Nations Funds	$417,840
Other Funds	$120,160
Total	**$655,949**

For more information, please contact:

Larry Paul
Eagle Village First Nation
PO Box 756
Témiscaming, QC J0Z 3R0
Tel.: 819-627-9034
Fax: 819-627-9428
E-mail: lmr@evfn.ca

The Office has also conducted a study to determine whether it would be feasible to set up a company to diversify the community's forest activities and extend the work periods of silvicultural workers. The study, funded by the FNFP, looked at the potential for harvesting forest products other than lumber (for example, wild mushrooms and blueberries).

The success of the Eagle Village First Nation's Land and Resources Management Office is attracting interest outside the community. Other Quebec Aboriginal communities are quickly taking similar action to protect as many forest lands as possible. The Eagle Village First Nation believes that it is vitally important to make key players aware of the importance of preserving forests in order to optimize the traditional Aboriginal activities that can be carried out. By preserving the forests, doors are opened to other development opportunities that are compatible with community values, and First Nations are given opportunities to ensure a future for themselves that reflects their traditions.

Eel Ground First Nation, New Brunswick

Certification earns new respect for First Nations forestry company

Located on the north shore of New Brunswick, the Eel Ground First Nation is home to a diverse Acadian forest. But in the past, the forest has suffered because of heavy cutting in the region.

For nearly two decades, the community has made a concerted effort to develop and protect the area's natural resources. Steve Ginnish, former Forestry Development Officer for Eel Ground, says that the community's goals are twofold: to promote economic growth and to preserve the forest's cultural, spiritual and historical value.

Steve has had a close hand in ensuring that the community continues to thrive. He was brought on as a consultant in 1990 when the First Nation decided to implement a forest management plan under Eel Ground's forestry program.

Eel Ground First Nation

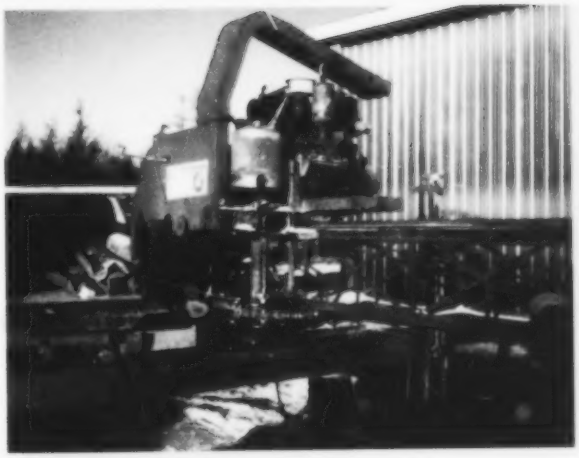
One of the program's primary objectives was to obtain certification that would prove to industry members that Eel Ground was following a sustainable forest management plan. "(Buyers) wanted to see that our products were coming from a forest operation that's replacing more or less what it takes," says Steve, who also co-managed Eel Ground's Straight Arrow Specialized Lumber Products.

Although many organizations offered certification, the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) was chosen because it was viewed by the community as the most appropriate one to address Aboriginal rights. "FSC provided means for First Nations to effectively participate in the industry, but at the same time effectively manage their own land," says Steve.

With funding from the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP), Steve began the long process of obtaining certification. In 2005, the forest management plan was finalized and approved by FSC.

Steve says that certification has earned Straight Arrow Specialized Lumber Products recognition and respect as a First Nations business. "We're starting to make a footprint in forestry."

Today, the goal is to maintain the company's certification. With continued support from the FNFP, Eel Ground is carrying out forest management activities as prescribed in their forest management plan. In 2007 and early 2008,



FNFP funding was used to complete 40 hectares of pre-commercial thinning as recommended in the plan.

In addition to expanding into the forest industry, the Eel Ground Forestry Program has increased employment within the community. In 2007 alone, seven new positions were filled by Eel Ground members.

Gail Sark, Eel Ground's Geographic Information System Technician, has welcomed the opportunity to be involved in her community's forestry initiative. As part of the Eel Ground Forestry Program, she completed a five-week Professional Forest Worker course at the New Brunswick Community College. Her training enabled her to conduct most of the mapping and data collection that helped secure Eel Ground's FSC certification.

For Gail, a former receptionist, working outdoors and getting to know the landscape has been very rewarding. "You see so many different things," says Gail. "The trees, the wildlife."

Steve, who continues to volunteer his time as an advisor for the Eel Ground Forestry Program, is pleased with the progress the community has made. As Eel Ground continues to cultivate its resources according to the forest management plan, Steve hopes to see the First Nation build an even stronger, more self-sufficient economy.

Total Funding	
FNFP Funds	$40,530
First Nations Funds	$90,570
Other Funds	$0
Total	**$131,100**

For more information, please contact:

Virginia Gail Sark
Eel Ground First Nation
40 Micmac Road
Eel Ground, NB E1V 4B1
Tel.: 506-627-4747
Fax: 506-627-4502
E-mail: egcdcgis@nb.aibn.com

Sucker Creek First Nation and Bigstone Cree Nation, Alberta

Fire prevention program protects communities and creates employment

In 2006, there were over 9,000 wildfires in Canada. They destroyed millions of hectares of forested land and forced the evacuation of many communities. Over 60 percent of these fires were caused by human activity.

To help reduce the risk of accidental forest and prairie wildfires, the Alberta-based non-profit coalition Partners in Protection implemented the FireSmart program. Launched in the early 2000s, FireSmart helps individuals and communities work together to prevent loss, damage and injury from wildfires. As part of the program, a Home Owners' Manual was issued that outlines the best methods of prevention, including clearing timber and other debris from fallen trees.

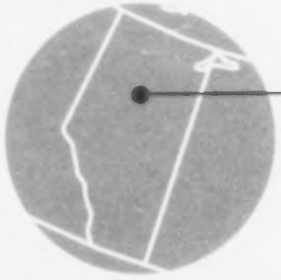
Since 2003, the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP) has supported over 20 FireSmart programs in First Nations communities across western Canada. Two of these communities are Sucker Creek First Nation and Bigstone Cree Nation, both in Alberta.

Sucker Creek is located on the western shores of Lesser Slave Lake, 22 kilometres east of High Prairie and about 350 kilometres northwest of Edmonton. In 2005, the community used FNFP funds to complete the FireSmart Plan, which identifies high-risk areas for wildfires. Sucker Creek began a clean-up process to decrease fire risk and engaged an Aboriginal Junior Ranger crew to help conduct home-to-home evaluations.

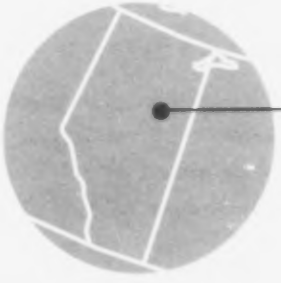
In the summers of 2006 and 2007, crews were hired to clean up the remaining residential areas, create a fireguard around reserve boundaries and complete the prescribed burning.

Alvin Cardinal, Director of Human Resource Development for the Sucker Creek First Nation, says that the project not only made the community safer, it also created employment. Both years the FireSmart program ran, it provided work for 10 Sucker Creek members, as well as administration staff from the community.

Bigstone Cree Nation's FireSmart project took place in December 2007 and January 2008 on the Jean Baptiste Gambler 183 reserve, located



Sucker Creek First Nation



Bigstone Cree Nation

50 kilometres north of Athabasca. Brush was cut and the area was cleared to reduce fire hazards. The project created employment for 10 community members and equipment contractors, and provided fire prevention education to local residents.

Darlene Gambler, Career Employment Counsellor at Bigstone Cree Nation Human Resource Development, explains that the program was run as a pilot. "The FNFP wanted to see if this would work, and if we succeeded then we would probably run the program again next winter."

The program did work, she says, in part because residents came to her office to find training and employment. So she had plenty of willing candidates for the FireSmart program.

Both Alvin and Darlene hope to secure further FNFP funding to keep the FireSmart program running in their communities. "In my eyes, I think it worked out to prevent forest fires," says Darlene. "And it increased employment." It was a win-win situation for all involved.

Total Funding	
Sucker Creek (2005–2008)	
FNFP Funds	$70,000
First Nations Funds	$26,090
Other Funds	$46,030
Total	**$142,120**

For more information, please contact:
Alvin Cardinal
Sucker Creek First Nation
PO Box 65
Enilda, AB T0G 0W0
Tel.: 780-523-4426
Fax: 780-523-3111
E-mail: alvincardinal@hotmail.com

Total Funding	
Bigstone Cree (2007–2008)	
FNFP Funds	$25,000
First Nations Funds	$7,000
Other Funds	$0
Total	**$32,000**

For more information, please contact:
Gloria Anderson
Bigstone Cree Nation
PO Box 960
Desmarais, AB T0G 2K0
Tel.: 780-891-3313
Fax: 780-891-3301
E-mail: gloria.anderson@bigstone.ca
Website: www.bigstone.ca

Chapter 5:

Skills Training

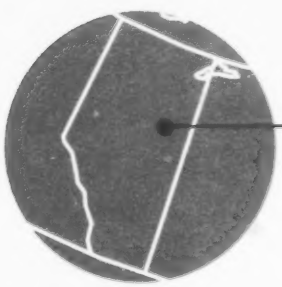
Whitefish Lake First Nation, Alberta

Firefighter training contributes to employment while protecting communities

Over the past few years, the number of wildfires in Canada has been on the rise. In 2006, about 9,000 fires started, a marked increase from roughly 7,000 in 2005, and 6,000 in 2004. Wildfires can break out in any of the country's forested areas, but the western provinces have been particularly badly affected. Alberta alone experienced nearly 2,000 wildfires in 2006.

To deal with the problem, the Alberta Department of Sustainable Resource Development (SRD) – Forestry Division, contracted several fire suppression companies. One of them is Goodfish Management Company Inc., a First Nation owned and operated business located in Whitefish Lake First Nation, nearly 70 kilometres west of Bonneyville, Alberta.

Darryl Steinhauer, Manager of Goodfish Management, was happy to secure the contract. But he knew that his company didn't have the capacity to meet all of SRD's requirements.



Whitefish Lake First Nation

Many members of the current workforce had moved on to other opportunities, so the demand for trained and skilled wildland firefighters remained high in his community.

"We needed more trained people," says Darryl. "So we approached the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP) to help fund the training program so we could increase our capacity."

With funding from the FNFP, Goodfish Management Company Inc. was able to extend its three-week training program to 12 weeks and add several new components to the curriculum. The updated program includes firefighting training, safety courses, chainsaw use and safety, life skills and a two-week work practicum.

In the spring of 2006, 16 Whitefish Lake firefighters were trained in Wildland Firefighting Suppression Techniques. "It was a mixed group of youth and adults," says Darryl. Upon completing their training, participants were offered employment with Goodfish Management.

The company has continued to run its extended training program and, in the summer of 2007, trained another 16 firefighters with funding from sources outside of the FNFP.

Darryl is pleased with the program's success and forsees continuing demand for the skilled workers it produces. "Even with us training 16 new firefighters for the last couple of seasons, it's still not enough," he says.

The training has not only opened new doors in terms of preparing First Nations workers for the forestry sector, it has also provided the community with increased capability to respond to the potential crisis caused by fire.

"There are so many different ways that (FNFP programming) could be beneficial to a lot of the other communities," says Darryl. "Increasing infrastructure within the First Nations themselves—starting forestry programs, harvesting programs, traditional land use studies... there are just so many ways that First Nations could benefit."

Total Funding	
FNFP Funds	$25,000
First Nations Funds	$25,600
Other Funds	$44,670
Total	**$95,270**

For more information, please contact:

Darryl Steinhauer
Whitefish Lake Band #128
PO Box 271
Goodfish Lake, AB T0A 1R0
Tel.: 780-636-7000
Fax: 780-636-3534
E-mail: dstein1@telus.net
Website: www.whitefishlake.ca

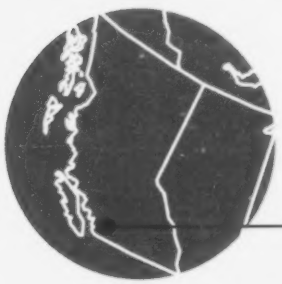
Ch-ihl-kway-uhk Tribe, British Columbia

Eight communities join forces to increase forestry opportunities

The Ch-ihl-kway-uhk Tribe is a society of nine Fraser Valley First Nations located throughout the Chilliwack River Valley in southern British Columbia. It consists of six First Nations of the Sto:lo Nation (Aitchelitz, Skowkale, Shxwhá:y Village, Squiala, Tzeachten and Yakweakwioose), two First Nations of the Sto:lo Tribal Council (Kwaw Kwaw Apilt and Soowahlie) and the unaffiliated Skwah First Nation.

There is no shortage of trees in the area. Douglas fir, red cedar, hemlock and a variety of deciduous trees make up the region's forests. So it made perfect sense for the First Nations to start a forestry company. The initiative would benefit the area's economy and provide sustainable employment for its residents.

In March 2004, chiefs from eight of the nine Fraser Valley First Nations joined to form the Ch-ihl-kway-uhk Forestry Limited Partnership (CFLP). However, it was evident from the beginning that there was a shortage of skilled workers within the communities. As a First Nations business, the partnership determined that they needed to build capacity from within if they were to succeed.



Ch-ihl-kway-uhk Tribe

Matt Wealick, Manager of Forest Operations, was tasked with finding a way to increase capacity. So he applied to the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP) for assistance. "I saw this as an opportunity to hopefully find some funding to start developing capacity and make the community aware of what they had," says Matt.

With FNFP funding in place, Matt engaged Pamela Perrault, a facilitator and forest policy consultant, to develop a capacity-building strategy. In May 2006, Pamela began interviewing community members and leaders from the eight First Nations who comprise the CFLP.

"The CFLP project was unique in that it actually involved eight communities with very different agendas," says Pamela. "Our major finding was that everybody had a different idea of what they felt the employment needs were and how that related to capacity development for the company."

Pamela worked with the communities' leaders to help them develop a common vision and mission statement that reflected each of their interests. In her report, which was completed in February 2007, she also recommended that the CFLP develop a website. The site would inform

community members about the many and varied career opportunities in forestry, and would serve as an interactive communication tool for committee members.

The website, which was developed with FNFP funding, is near completion and scheduled to launch in 2009.

As Matt begins to put the capacity-building strategy into effect, he hopes that within the next five or six years he will have a forestry company run entirely by First Nations people from the eight partnership communities. "Our end goal is to manage our forestry agreement and our traditional territories' resources internally."

Pamela says that Matt and the CFLP are well on their way to meeting their goals. "They're in an excellent position to attract a lot of capacity, especially with Matt, an Aboriginal forester, at the helm," she says.

Total Funding	
FNFP Funds	$22,629
First Nations Funds	$9,350
Other Funds	$0
Total	**$31,979**

For more information, please contact:

Matt Wealick
Ch-ihl-kway-uhk Forestry Limited Partnership
6014 Vedder Road, Unit 29
Chilliwack, BC V2R 5M4
Tel.: 604-858-0009
Fax: 604-858-3829
E-mail: matt.wealick@shawcable.com

Brokenhead Ojibway Nation, Manitoba

Skills training empowers forestry workers to start their own company

A few years ago, Councillor Paul Chief of the Brokenhead Ojibway Nation Forestry Management Team, set a long-term goal: to train a team of First Nations workers who would establish a contracting company specializing in forest management surveying. As Councillor Chief saw it, creating a business that uses internal resources and generates employment for Brokenhead Ojibway Nation members would be a big step toward self-sufficiency and economic growth for members of the community.

Several Brokenhead members had been introduced to the forestry sector when they were sub-contracted for a Manitoba Conservation Timber Volume Sampling project in 2002. Keen to maintain their interest in the forestry sector, Project Manager Deborah Smith applied to the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP) for funding. "We wanted to further diversify their skills," says Deborah.

Brokenhead Ojibway Nation

With the FNFP's assistance, six Brokenhead members received five days of in-class and field training in conducting pre-harvest assessments during the summer of 2004. Their training was overseen by Tembec Industries Inc., a leading integrated forest products company.

Deborah says that the experience was invaluable for the trainees. "The level of skills and knowledge that's been gained by our field crews... has given them access to employment opportunities that they didn't have before."

Inspired by the success of the pre-harvest assessment training, Deborah applied to the FNFP again for funding in 2006. Thanks to the program's continued support, Brokenhead was able to continue forestry management skills training for the Forestry Management Team conducting free-to-grow surveys, and also to train 10 members in Geographic Information System (GIS) technologies in the summer of 2006. Deborah hired Ariel Lupu, from the Winnipeg-based engineering company Acres Manitoba Ltd., to conduct the eight-day training session.

Deborah is very happy with the results of the training. She says that the Brokenhead Ojibway Nation Forestry Management Team has met its short-term goal, which was to provide Brokenhead members with the opportunity to become certified in forest management surveying. "We have a successful team that is proficient in four specific types of forestry management surveying," says Deborah.

As for the long-term goal, the community is well on its way. In 2007, two members of the training group started their own contracting company, Tamarack Forestry Management Resources. Last year, the company conducted pre-harvest assessments and free-to-grow surveys for Tembec Industries. Not only that, they hired four other Brokenhead members to help with the work.

Deborah would like to secure future funding to continue training and skills development in other areas. For example, Brokenhead plans to extend the GIS project to look at other applications for the technology. The Brokenhead Ojibway Nation Forestry Management Team is currently conducting a series of regeneration surveys to determine growth rates in the region's forests.

With continued support from government and private sector collaborators, there is no limit to how far the members of Brokenhead Ojibway Nation can go.

Total Funding	
FNFP Funds	$24,000
First Nations Funds	$35,400
Other Funds	$53,000
Total	**$112,400**

For more information, please contact:

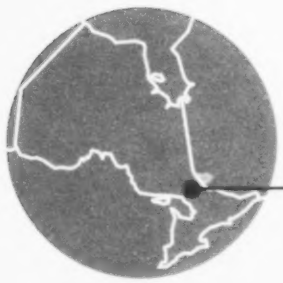
Deborah Smith
Brokenhead Ojibway Nation
Scanterbury, MB R0E 1W0
Tel.: 204-766-2318
Fax: 204-766-2306
E-mail: dlsmith0699@shaw.ca
Website: www.brokenheadojibway nation.net

N'Swakamok Forestry Corporation, Ontario

First Nations forest workers upgrade their skills to practise forestry on Crown lands

The N'Swakamok Forestry Corporation is owned by the Wahnapitae, Henvey Inlet, Whitefish Lake and Dokis First Nations, and the Wikwemikong Unceded Reserve. As a partner in the Vermilion Forest Management Company Ltd., it operates under a sustainable forest licence that covers provincial Crown lands south of Sudbury, Ontario. When hiring contractors to work in the forest, the Corporation looks to First Nations for suitable contractors before looking further afield.

Unfortunately, many First Nations contractors do not meet provincial contracting requirements. Contractors working on provincial Crown lands have to be trained in first aid, workplace health and safety, firefighting techniques and hazardous materials management. They also need to be able to identify trees and follow prescriptions regarding what species can be cut and in what areas.



N'Swakamok Forestry Corporation

"These forests are selectively harvested, so contractors need to be able to tell the difference between species, even in winter when the leaves are gone," explains Martin Litchfield, a forestry consultant for the N'Swakamok Forestry Corporation.

"First Nations people who have been working on reserve forest lands may know the trees, but not understand the prescriptions for reforestation and other regulations that are used on provincial Crown lands," he explains. "To conserve fish habitats, for example, Crown forests often have no-cut or partial-cut zones near rivers. First Nations reserve forests are not legally subject to the same regulations."

To make use of experienced First Nations contractors on its licensed lands, the N'Swakamok Forestry Corporation needed to address this knowledge gap. In 2007, with help from the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP), the Corporation developed a series of training modules to help contract workers upgrade their skills.

"Now when we have new First Nations contractors who want to work on provincial Crown lands, we can assess their skills and fill in the gaps. They take only the modules they need," explains Martin, who helped develop the modules and implement the training program. "We have a series of PowerPoint training programs that are offered in classroom sessions in the communities in spring and early summer. Then we do follow-up in the field."

The program was developed partly because the N'Swakamok Forestry Corporation had been having problems adhering to the rules on provincial Crown lands. "We had received a number of non-compliance reports and fines because contractors were doing things that were unacceptable," Martin says. "Since the training modules were introduced, there have been no new negative reports or fines."

"Once it's explained how the rules protect habitats and watersheds, and promote regeneration, the contractors, who have a feel for the land, really understand," Martin says.

Martin hopes that similar forestry regulations will be adopted more widely once First Nations contractors better understand them. "A number of First Nations have implemented similar controls," he says. "Whitefish Lake First Nation, for example, has incorporated buffer zones along its rivers."

FNFP assistance has been valuable to the First Nations in the area, Martin concludes. "We want economic development that's ecologically sound, and this training has really increased awareness about sustainable forestry," he says. "The next step is to encourage more First Nations entrepreneurs to expand their businesses and start working on Crown lands."

Total Funding	
FNFP Funds	$25,500
First Nations Funds	$40,000
Other Funds	$5,600
Total	**$71,100**

For more information, please contact:

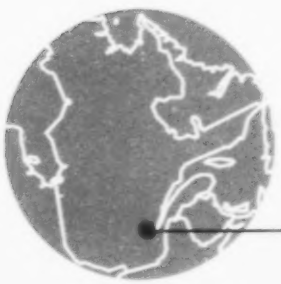
Art Jacko
N'Swakamok Forestry Corporation
172 Old Village Road
Birch Island, ON P0P 1A0
Tel.: 705-285-4004
Fax: 705-285-2005
E-mail: nswakamok@personainternet.com

First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Sustainable Development Institute, Quebec

First Nations share their knowledge on sustainable development

The First Nations of Quebec took good advantage of the Carrefour de la recherche forestière du Québec to make key contacts with forest sector representatives. Organized for researchers and other forest sector players, this triennial event attracts approximately 3,000 participants from the private sector, teaching institutions, research centres and various government and municipal services. Its objective is to promote exchanges among individuals who contribute towards knowledge and technology in the forest and environmental sectors.

With the aim of creating jobs for First Nations in different forestry areas and fostering partnerships in these areas, the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Sustainable Development Institute (FNQLSDI) organized a provincial symposium for First Nations and industry stakeholders, which took place on the second day of the Carrefour.



First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Sustainable Development Institute

Also, thanks to the support of the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP), the FNQLSDI was able to finance and organize eight workshops that attracted over 100 participants. Managers, researchers and professors addressed numerous topics ranging from the different trends in forestry management by the First Nations of Canada, to case studies. The workshops included, among other things, models of co-management and ecosystem planning, as well as a study to introduce a First Nations forestry cooperative in Quebec.

"The Carrefour is an excellent platform for us," states Mario Gros-Louis. A forestry engineer and project manager at the FNQLSDI, Mario was responsible for organizing the joint forum. "Since it attracts so many people, the Carrefour is an excellent way for us to highlight the job opportunities and contract possibilities available with First Nations. We also believe this is a good opportunity to break down barriers between cultures that are sometimes hesitant to know more about one other."

The forum has also helped the FNQLSDI obtain experience and identify new opportunities to gain visibility. "Thanks to this forum, we're now in a position to give other presentations and participate in more events," Mario says. "We have managed to make ourselves known. The success of the forum has

inspired us to find other opportunities to hold conferences for people interested in working with us."

A non-profit regional organization, the FNQLSDI develops tools to help First Nations communities achieve sustainable development.

Total Funding

FNFP contributed $4,500 to six First Nations communities to help cover their attendance expenses for the 2007 FNQLSDI conference.

For more information, please contact:

Mario Gros-Louis
FNQLSDI
250 Place Chef Michel-Laveau, Suite 101
Wendake, QC G0A 4V0
Tel.: 418-843-9999
Fax: 418-843-3625
E-mail: mgroslouis@iddpnql.ca
Website: www.iddpnql.ca

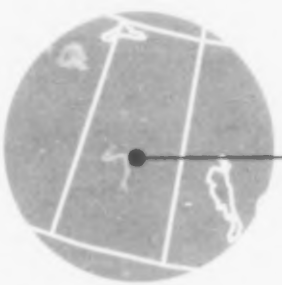
Sturgeon Lake First Nation, Saskatchewan

First Saskatchewan Junior Forest Ranger Program a success

Junior Forest Ranger programs have long been recognized as an excellent way to introduce Aboriginal youth to Canada's forestry sector. Many provinces have had great success with their Junior Ranger programs. But until 2006, there were no such programs available in Saskatchewan.

"It started out with the Prince Albert Model Forest Association and the Saskatchewan Forestry Association," says Ron Burns, Manager of First Nations Island Forest Management Inc. "(Both organizations) had seen that Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario had Junior Ranger programs and in Saskatchewan there weren't any."

Working together, Prince Albert Model Forest and Saskatchewan Forestry enlisted support from the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP) and Canada's Model Forest Program. They also received generous financial and in-kind support from other collaborators, including the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, James Smith Cree Nation, the Prince Albert Grand Council, Prince Albert Model Forest, Saskatchewan Environment, the Saskatchewan Forestry Association, the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST) and Sturgeon Lake First Nation.



Sturgeon Lake First Nation

Susan Carr, General Manager of Prince Albert Model Forest, says that her association is interested in the Junior Forest Ranger Program because of its potential for capacity-building and community sustainability. "Junior Forest Rangers builds capacity in the youth and encourages them to see the possibilities for them in their communities for future education and careers," says Susan.

In the summer of 2006, Sturgeon Lake First Nation hosted the first Saskatchewan Junior Forest Ranger Program. For six weeks, 12 Aboriginal youth were introduced to the science and principles of wildfire and forest management. Ron Burns, who took on the role of Program Coordinator, says it helped them develop the skills they need to work safely in the forestry sector.

Participants learned Type 1 Firefighting, First Aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), chainsaw operations, safe boating, all-terrain vehicle operation, Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS), life skills, firearm safety, forest measurements (plant, insect and disease identification), Global Positioning

System (GPS)/orientation, tree planting, stand release and community fireproofing.

Ron says that the program's main goal is to increase First Nations participation in the forestry sector by introducing youth to career options and promoting the completion of high school English, math and science courses. After the program's pilot year, all participants continued their schooling and two graduates went on to enrol in SIAST's forestry program.

With continued support from the FNFP, the program at Sturgeon Lake ran again in 2007 with 15 participants. As well, a second camp ran at Stanley Mission First Nation.

As the program continues to grow, Ron and Susan are looking for committed industry members and investors who are interested in making a long-term financial contribution. "There's a number of northern communities that want to have their own Junior Ranger program and we really need to put some money behind it to keep it going," says Susan.

Ron hopes that the FNFP continues to be involved. Their financial support and expertise have helped make the program what it is, and opened the eyes of First Nations youth to the opportunities in Saskatchewan's forestry sector.

Total Funding (2004–2008)	
FNFP Funds	$231,250
First Nations Funds	$233,500
Other Funds	$1,835,770
Total	**$2,300,520**

For more information, please contact:

Susan Carr
Prince Albert Model Forest
PO Box 2406
Prince Albert, SK S6V 7G3
Tel.: 306-953-8921
Fax: 306-763-6456
Email: susan.carr@sasktel.net
Website: www.pamodelforest.sk.ca

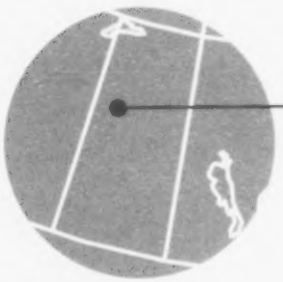
Meadow Lake Tribal Council, Saskatchewan

School to Work program provides valuable learning experience

Saskatchewan's Meadow Lake Tribal Council (MLTC) is committed to ensuring the well-being of the nine First Nations it represents. MLTC offers programs and services to its members in the areas of economic development, health and social development, and education.

One of the Council's initiatives is the MLTC School to Work program. Run through the Council's Economic Development Office, School to Work is designed to engage and employ youth in the forestry sector. The initiative offers First Nations high school students the opportunity to pursue studies in the forestry sector and provides work-related experiences throughout the summer.

"Our goal is to expose the students to non-traditional disciplines, get them to look at different career options," says Gordon Iron, Director of Economic Development for MLTC.



Meadow Lake Tribal Council

"We hope that we'll be able to encourage some of these students to go into forestry fields."

The program runs for approximately six weeks during the summer months when the students are on break. They are mentored by Elders who introduce them to holistic approaches to traditional forestry activities. Participants are also offered field demonstrations and placements, and an overview of various programs and departments at schools such as the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology.

MLTC School to Work has been in operation for nearly 10 years. Each year, the goal has been to enrol one high school student from each of the nine First Nations in Meadow Lake. In 2007, MLTC benefited from additional funding from the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP). The additional training support meant that they were able to increase the number of School to Work participants from 9 to 16.

Engaging youth in the School to Work program is important to its continued success. As Gordon Iron explains it, MLTC developed the template for the program, but the students are encouraged to take ownership of the initiative. "We recruit post-secondary students to come into the program as coordinators," he explains.

Brian Morin, Forest Protection Officer for the Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment in Buffalo Narrows, has hosted School to Work program

students for the past few summers. He says that the initiative is a positive step in recruiting First Nations youth to work in the forestry sector. "The majority of the students that came down were very interested," says Brian. "Last year there was a student that went into a forestry program after completing the summer program here."

For his part, Gordon is confident that the program is having a positive impact on the First Nations students. He hopes that additional funding in future years will allow them to attract more youth to the forestry sector. "We want to continue to expand the program," says Gordon.

Total Funding	
FNFP Funds	$17,000
First Nations Funds	$13,820
Other Funds	$0
Total	**$30,820**

For more information, please contact:

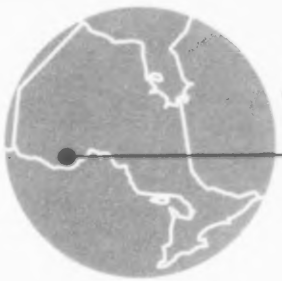
Gordon Iron
Meadow Lake Tribal Council
8003 Flying Dust Reserve
Meadow Lake, SK S9X 1T8
Tel.: 306-236-5654
Fax: 306-236-6301
E-mail: gordon.iron@mltc.net
Website: www.mltc.ca

First Nations Natural Resources Youth Employment Program, Ontario

Partnership approach key to success for First Nations Natural Resources Youth Employment Program

Having completed its ninth year, the First Nations Natural Resources Youth Employment Program (FNNRYEP) continues to prove to be an effective channel for engaging First Nations youth in forestry opportunities. It is also a successful example of First Nations communities partnering with government, industry and educational institutions to address unemployment, underemployment and barriers to education.

This two-year summer program, funded in part by the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP), provides Aboriginal youth aged 17 to 24 with live-in bush camp training. The students build forestry skills and learn about the tasks that typically comprise a working day for an average forestry worker. Each year, 25 to 30 First Nations high school students participate.



First Nations Natural Resources Youth Employment Program

The program grew out of the First Nations Ranger Program that Bowater (now AbitibiBowater), a forest products company, established in the Thunder Bay area in 2000. The Forestry Centre at Thunder Bay's Confederation College later took on the lead organizing and facilitating role.

In 2008, the program expanded to encompass a large area of northern Ontario and to include the participation of over 30 Ontario First Nations communities, as well as industry, academic, federal and provincial government partners. Since 2000, 209 youth have participated, of whom 93 percent completed the first-year program. Sixty percent returned for the second year, with 91 percent graduating.

For some sessions, such as tree planting, the youth are paid on a piecework basis, which, according to Brian Kurikka, General Manager of the Confederation College Forestry Centre, helps to promote friendly competition and a positive work ethic.

The program is not all work, however. Field trips include a visit to Confederation College, where participants learn about the various programs offered in the natural resources field. Students also take part in a "Road Map" exercise, which encourages them to think about their potential future career paths. Brian feels that the exercise serves as "a real morale booster" and "encourages the youth to continue on with their education."

Total Funding	
FNFP Funds	$51,000
First Nations Funds	$140,000
Other Funds	$373,430
Total	**$564,430**

For more information, please contact:

Brian Kurikka
Confederation College Forestry Centre
PO Box 398, 2400 Nipigon Road
Thunder Bay, ON P7C 4W1
Tel.: 807-475-6643
Fax: 807-475-6636
E-mail: bkurikka@confederationc.on.ca
Website: www.forestrycentre.ca

Proof of the program's effectiveness can be seen in its graduates. Many have gone on to work in the natural resources sector. Others have continued their forestry education after high school. One past participant is entering his third year of the forestry degree program (BScF) at Lakehead University and has completed his second summer working with Domtar, one of the program's key partners.

The key to the FNNRYEP's success, according to Brian, has been this partnership approach. "Even with the current downturn of the forestry industry, many of our forest industry partners, such as AbitibiBowater, Domtar and Tembec, remain dedicated to the success of this program," he says. "Not one organization or individual can do this. The continued support of the FNFP has provided the base to get additional funding; a track record of financial support goes a long way when trying to establish new partnerships."

Acknowledgements

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First Nations Forestry Program

First Nations Forestry Program Secretariat
580 Booth Street, Ottawa, ON K1A 0E4

cfs.nrcan.gc.ca/subsite/fnfp